

84 Now Marius, as we have already said, was chosen consul with the ardent support of the commons. While even before his election he had been hostile to the nobles, as soon as the people voted him the province of Numidia he attacked the aristocracy persistently and boldly, assailing now individuals and now the entire city. He boasted that he had wrested the consulship from them as the spoils of victory, and made other remarks calculated to glorify himself and exasperate them. All the while he gave his first attention to preparation for the war. He asked that the legions should be reinforced, summoned auxiliaries from foreign nations and kings, besides calling out the bravest men from Latium and from our allies, the greater number of whom he knew from actual service but a few only by reputation. By special inducements, too, he persuaded veterans who had served their time to join his expedition.

The senate, although it was hostile to him, did not venture to oppose any of his measures; the addition to the legions it was particularly glad to vote, because it was thought that the commons were disinclined to military service and that Marius would thus lose either resources for the war or the devotion of the people. But such a desire of following Marius had seized almost everyone, that the hopes of the senate were disappointed. Each man imagined himself enriched by booty or returning home a victor, along with other visions of the same kind. Marius too had aroused them in no slight degree by a speech of his; for when all the decrees for which he had asked had been passed and he wished to enroll soldiers, in order to encourage men to enlist and at the same time, according to his custom, to bait the nobles, he called an assembly of the people. Then he spoke in the following manner:

*--speech begins--*

85 "I know, fellow citizens, that it is by very different methods that most men ask for power at your hands and exercise it after it has been secured; that at first they are industrious, humble and modest, but afterwards they lead lives of indolence and arrogance. But the right course, in my opinion, is just the opposite; for by as much as the whole commonwealth is of more value than a consulate or a praetorship, so much greater ought to be the care with which it is governed than that which is shown in seeking those offices. Nor am I unaware how great a task I am taking upon myself in accepting this signal favour of yours. To prepare for war and at the same time to spare the treasury; to force into military service those whom one would not wish to offend; to have a care for everything at home and abroad — to do all this amid envy, enmity and intrigue, is a ruder task, fellow citizens, than you might suppose. Furthermore, if others make mistakes, their ancient nobility, the brave deeds of their ancestors, the power of their kindred and relatives, their throng of clients, are all a very present help. My hopes are all vested in myself and must be maintained by my own worth and integrity; for all other supports are weak.

"This too I understand, fellow citizens, that the eyes of all are turned towards me, that the just and upright favour me because my services are a benefit to our country, while the nobles are looking for a chance to attack me. Wherefore I must strive the more earnestly that you may not be deceived and that they may be disappointed. From childhood to my present time of life I have so lived that I am familiar

with every kind of hardship and danger. As to the efforts, fellow citizens, which before your favours were conferred upon me I made without recompense, it is not my intention to relax them now that they have brought me their reward. To make a moderate use of power is difficult for those who from interested motives have pretended to be virtuous; for me, who have spent my entire life in exemplary conduct, habit has made right living a second nature. You have bidden me conduct the war against Jugurtha, a commission which has sorely vexed the nobles. I pray you, ponder well whether it would be better to change your minds and send on this or any similar errand one of that ring of nobles, a man of ancient lineage and many ancestral portraits — but no campaigns; in order, no doubt, that being wholly in ignorance of the duties of such an office, he might hurry and bustle about and select some one of the common people to act as his adviser. In fact, it very often happens that the man whom you have selected as a commander looks about for someone else to command him. I personally know of men, citizens, who after being elected consuls began for the first time to read the history of our forefathers and the military treatises of the Greeks, preposterous creatures! for though in order of time administration follows election, yet in actual practice it comes first.

“Compare me now, fellow citizens, a 'new man,' with those haughty nobles. What they know from hearsay and reading, I have either seen with my own eyes or done with my own hands. What they have learned from books I have learned by service in the field; Think now for yourself whether words or deeds are worth more. They scorn my humble birth, I their worthlessness; I am taunted with my lot in life, they with their infamies. For my part, I believe that all men have one and the same nature, but that the bravest is the best born; and if the fathers of Albinus and Bestia could now be asked whether they would prefer to have me or those men for their descendants, what do you suppose they would reply, if not that they desired to have the best possible children?

“But if they rightly look down on me, let them also look down on their own forefathers, whose nobility began, as did my own, in manly deeds. They begrudge me my office; then let them begrudge my toil, my honesty, even my dangers, since it was through those that I won the office. In fact, these men, spoiled by pride, live as if they scorned your honours, but seek them as if their own lives were honourable. Surely they are deceived when they look forward with equal confidence to things which are worlds apart, the joys of idleness and the rewards of merit. Even when they speak to you or address the senate, their theme is commonly a eulogy of their ancestors; by recounting the exploits of their forefathers they imagine themselves more glory. The very reverse is true. The more glorious was the life of their ancestors, the more shameful is their own baseness. Assuredly the matter stands thus: the glory of ancestors is, as it were, a light shining upon their posterity, suffering neither their virtues nor their faults to be hidden. Of such glory I acknowledge my poverty, fellow citizens; but — and that is far more glorious — I have done deeds of which I have a right to speak. Now see how unfair those men are; what they demand for themselves because of others' merit they do not allow me as the result of my own, no doubt because I have no family portraits and because mine is a new nobility. And yet surely to be its creator is better than to have inherited and disgraced it.

“I am of course well aware that if they should deign to reply to me, their language would be abundantly eloquent and elaborate. But since after the great honour which you have done me they take every opportunity to rend us both with their invectives, I thought it best not to be silent, for fear that someone might interpret my reticence as due to a guilty conscience. In point of fact, I am confident that I can be injured by no speech; for if they tell the truth, they cannot but speak well of me, and falsehood my life and character refutes. But since it is your judgment in giving me your highest office and a most important commission which they criticize, consider again and yet again whether you ought to regret those acts. I cannot, to justify your confidence, display family portraits or the triumphs and consulships of my forefathers; but if occasion requires, I can show spears, a banner, trappings and other military prizes, as well as scars on my breast. These are my portraits, these my patent of nobility, not left me by inheritance as theirs were, but won by my own innumerable efforts and perils.

“My words are not well chosen; I care little for that. Merit shows well enough in itself. It is they who have need of art, to gloss over their shameful acts with specious words. Nor have I studied Grecian letters. I did not greatly care to become acquainted with them, since they had not taught their teachers virtue. But I have learned by far the most important lesson for my country's good — to strike down the foe, to keep watch and ward, to fear nothing save ill repute, to endure heat and cold alike, to sleep on the ground, to bear privation and fatigue at the same time. It is with these lessons that I shall encourage my soldiers; I shall not treat them stingily and myself lavishly, nor win my own glory at the price of their toil. Such leadership is helpful, such leadership is democratic; for to live in luxury oneself but control one's army by punishments is to be a master of slaves, not a commander. It was by conduct like this that your forefathers made themselves and their country famous; but the nobles, relying upon such ancestors though themselves of very different character, despise us who emulate the men of old, and claim from you all honours, not from desert, but as a debt.

“But those most arrogant of men are greatly in error. Their ancestors have left them all that they could — riches, portrait busts, their own illustrious memory; virtue they have not left them, nor could they have done so; that alone is neither bestowed nor received as a gift. They say that I am common and of rude manners, because I cannot give an elegant dinner and because I pay no actor or cook higher wages than I do my overseer. This I gladly admit, fellow citizens; for I learned from my father and other righteous men that elegance is proper to women but toil to men, that all the virtuous ought to have more fame than riches, and that arms and not furniture confer honour.

“Well then, let them continue to do what pleases them and what they hold dear; let them make love and drink; let them pass their old age where they have spent their youth, in banquets, slaves to their belly and the most shameful parts of their body. Sweat, dust, and all such things let them leave to us, to

whom they are sweeter than feasts. But they will not; for when those most shameless of men have disgraced themselves by their crimes, they come to rob the virtuous of their rewards. Thus, most unjustly, their luxury and sloth, the most abominable of faults, in no wise injure those who practise them, but are the ruin of their blameless country.

“Now that I have replied to them to the extent that my character — but not their crimes — demanded I shall say a few words about our country. First of all, be of good cheer as to Numidia, citizens; for you have put away everything which up to this time has protected Jugurtha — avarice, incompetence, and arrogance. Furthermore, there is an army in Africa familiar with the country, but by the gods! more valiant than fortunate; for a great part of it has perished through the greed or rashness of its leaders. Therefore do you, who are of military age, join your efforts with mine and serve your country, and let no one feel fear because of disasters to others or the arrogance of generals. I, Marius, shall be with you on the march and in battle, at once your counselor and the companion of your dangers, and I shall treat myself and you alike in all respects. And surely with the help of the gods everything is ripe for us — victory, spoils, glory; but even though these were uncertain or remote, yet all good men ought to fly to the aid of their fatherland. Truly, no one ever became immortal through cowardice, and no parent would wish for his children that they might live forever, but rather that their lives might be noble and honoured. I would say more, citizens, if words could make cowards brave. For the resolute I think I have spoken abundantly.”

86 After Marius had made a speech in these terms and saw that it had fired the spirit of the commons, he made haste to load his ships with provisions, money, arms, and other necessities, with which he bade his lieutenant Aulus Manlius set sail. He himself in the meantime enrolled soldiers, not according to the classes in the manner of our forefathers, but allowing anyone to volunteer, for the most part the proletariat. Some say that he did this through lack of good men, others because of a desire to curry favour, since that class had given him honour and rank. As a matter of fact, to one who aspires to power the poorest man is the most helpful, since he has no regard for his property, having none, and considers anything honourable for which he receives pay. The result was that Marius set sail for Africa with a considerably greater contingent than had been authorized. A few days later he arrived at Utica, where the army was handed over to him by the second in command, Publius Rutilius. For Metellus had avoided meeting Marius, that he might not see what he had been unable even to hear of with composure.